

pictures of his laboratory and apparatus. There are also photographs of some of his colleagues. But the best illustration, which will appeal to many, is the superb pencil portrait done by his grand-niece Lucie when she was only thirteen years old. Einthoven was looked on with admiration by his friends and associates for his unfailing courtesy, patience, and modesty, as well as for his genius and untiring devotion to his work.

Professor Snellen acknowledges his debt to two earlier books about Einthoven written in Dutch, especially to the full account by A de Waart published in 1957. The present volume is not a complete biography but it provides a most welcome and useful account of Einthoven's life and work, and it contains material which has not previously been published. Many cardiologists and medical historians will be indebted to Professor Snellen and will salute him for completing, in his ninetieth year, this tribute to a great Dutch scientist.

Arthur Hollman, Pett, East Sussex

Charlotte Roberts and Keith Manchester, *The archaeology of disease*, 2nd ed., Far Thrupp, Glos., Alan Sutton, and Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1995, pp. x, 243, illus., £25.00 (0-7509-0595-6).

This work is the second edition of Keith Manchester's book of the same title (Bradford, 1983), which sought to survey the various ways and means by which palaeopathology can identify and interpret illnesses and injuries of the past from the human skeletal remains found in archaeological contexts. Two introductory chapters introduce the study of palaeopathology and such demographic issues as population size, structures of age and sex, stature, morbidity and mortality, and ethnicity and disease. Chapters on specific problems cover congenital disease, dentition, trauma (including battle injuries, scalping, infanticide, and cannibalism), joint disease, specific and non-specific infectious illnesses, metabolic and endocrine disease, and cancer.

Among the many merits of the book is its wide-ranging approach to its subject. Avoiding the temptation to restrict their inquiry to skeletal remains only, the authors also bring written records and works of art and ethnography into their discussion; their interpretation of disease phenomena is especially noteworthy for its emphasis on social and cultural factors. The chapter on congenital disease, for example, argues persuasively that palaeopathology can tell us much about attitudes toward the physically and mentally impaired in ancient societies, since many such individuals could have survived only if the family or communal group had been willing to devote considerable time and trouble to their care and support. Also noteworthy are the book's fine balance between clinical and historical insight, and the apparent ease with which it meets the challenge of describing an often highly technical field accurately, on the one hand, and clearly enough to meet the needs of non-specialists, on the other. Its precise yet lucid style perhaps owes much to the fact that its primary author is professionally qualified as both a medical practitioner and a university lecturer in the archaeological sciences.

The new edition marks a complete revision of the original 1983 work. The field of palaeopathology has advanced enormously in the interim and has witnessed important new developments; fully half of the bibliography and references serve to incorporate new research. A final chapter on "the next ten years" has been added to consider the main problems and priorities of the field as they appear in the mid-1990s. In the former category, the authors stress needs involving the collection of data and research results: a world-wide registry of palaeopathological cases, a central bibliography, a compilation on skeletal material with known histories, and a collection of clear illustrations of important case histories—in all such endeavours a focus on a standardization of recording is clearly essential. The need to apply new scientific techniques of microscopy, radiology, and biochemical analysis is also emphasized, with

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the cautionary note that forays into such expensive research must proceed on the basis of a coherent “research design”, as opposed to curiosity or enthusiasm to “try out” new techniques.

So on what areas should research be concentrated at present? Roberts and Manchester suggest three topics where optimum use could be made of available funding: the relation of health to the transition to agriculture, differences in health and medical conditions between urban and rural communities, and the interplay between gender and health. But here again: “The important message is not to study palaeopathology for ‘its own sake’. Genuine research questions must be asked of the data; in this way a more meaningful interpretation will result.” (p. 202)

The archaeology of disease in its new revised dress is a first-rate introduction to the field of palaeopathology, and is an ideal starting point for both students and historians in other areas of research. For specialists, however, it will also prove valuable for its numerous fresh insights and observations on the present state and future prospects of the field.

Lawrence I Conrad, Wellcome Institute

Gerrit Bos, *Ibn al-Jazzār on forgetfulness and its treatment. Critical edition of the Arabic text and the Hebrew translations with commentary and translation into English*, The Sir Henry Wellcome Asian Series, vol. 1, London, The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1995, pp. 91, £15.00 (0–947593–12–8). Distributed by Lavis Marketing, 73 Lyme Walk, Headington, Oxford OX3 7AD (Tel: +44 1865 67575; Fax: +44 1865 750079).

A hearty welcome to this new “Asian Series” which, under its three enterprising editors, Lawrence I Conrad, Paul Unschuld and Dominik Wujastyk, aims “to make available fine editions of the medical and scientific classics of Asia . . . in their original languages”

and in modern translation. Its inaugural volume, this little medical tract by Ibn al-Jazzār (died c. AD 980), is presented in the original Arabic from the only known text, together with the editor’s excellent English translation and two different medieval Hebrew versions. It does not include the eleventh-century Latin translation by Constantine, by which it was introduced to Europe, albeit under his own name.

Problems of memory and forgetfulness (mental retention and its impairment) received much attention in ancient and medieval times, before printed books were available: not least by Aristotle in his philosophico-psychological study: *On memory and recollection*, which, like most other works on the subject, also considers mental training to enhance the power of memorization.

In his interesting introductory Chapter 3, Gerrit Bos describes medieval Jewish and Arab systems of this kind. Yet this “letter” by Ibn al-Jazzār, which purports to answer the queries of an elderly sufferer, appears to be the only extant Arabic work devoted to “forgetfulness” in general. Moreover, the condition is here considered solely as a pathological entity, and, on the basis of an amalgam of Greek concepts regarding the anatomy of the brain and its abnormal operation, “medical” treatment alone is prescribed. The latter is even recommended for the enhancement of physiological memory which, however, is not otherwise discussed. Thus, excessive “coldness” or “moistness” is said to alter the humoral balance by causing an over-production of “phlegm”. Forgetfulness results when this obstructs the flow of “psychic pneuma” in the posterior ventricle of the brain. Treatment essentially consists of polypharmacy, using mainly “warming” or “drying” medicaments to prevent the production of excess phlegm, or drugs which expel it from the body. (In this connection I suggest that the plant-name *balādhur*, frequently cited in both the Arabic and Hebrew versions, but left untranslated in English, could be a transliteration of the Latin *pellitory*: a term given to various plants used for tanning skins, on account of their powerful drying